

Minutes from 9/30/05 Meeting
Held at Ripley County DCS

In attendance: India Turner; Rob King; Traci Eggleston; Judge Todd; Cindi Wagner; Mary Riede; Judge Taul and Melissa Norman.

Introductions were held.

There was a brief discussion about the expectation for the region and the Regional Service Councils. Discussion was initiated about the services within Region 15. It appears as though there are many shared services within the region, although there is increased variation with Decatur and Jefferson counties. These counties also have a different mental health provider.

Discussion was had on service delivery gaps. The comment was made that for many services, we have more providers than we know what to do with and then for other services we don't have enough providers. Other service gaps mentioned were lack of local foster homes. Judge Todd stated that he likes for children to remain in their current school setting in an attempt to minimize disruption to the child when they have to be removed from the home. Transportation was also discussed and how this impacts the ability of parents and children to get to appointments or participate in other activities that are needed so that families can get the help they need. Now with the price of gas, even if they have transportation, it is expensive for them to travel.

Continuity of care was a concern to the group. Several impediments were noted such as a lack of qualified workers, lower pay scale for these workers, and they can only bill for face to face contacts. It was also mentioned that some agencies are good at initiating new, innovative programs but there was a problem with sustaining these programs; once again causing service disruption for families and the community.

One of the solutions offered for the transportation issue was coordinating with the schools or independent bus drivers to see if school busses could be used to transport children to appointments or other activities as needed. It was suggested that we make arrangements for school personnel to attend a meeting so this possibility could be explored further.

The group began a discussion about prevention services. The group felt like a great deal of time should be devoted to this topic because ultimately success in this area will lead to fewer families and children being involved in DCS. There was talk about mental health services being delivered in a school setting by the local mental health provider. This would minimize the need for transportation. Some local school systems have had programs like this in the past but funding was not available to sustain it. A lot of discussion centered on Healthy Families and how we could ensure that this type of prevention program could target the truly at-risk population. There was concern from within the group that the voluntary nature of the program tends to exclude many of the families with which DCS becomes involved.

- Is there a way that a similar program can be created where participants are court ordered into services?
- Is this a program that could be housed under DCS?
- Can we get a copy of their model?
- Could mental health providers be trained to use this model and bill Medicaid for services? (Problem might be that it would follow the medical model)

There are several hospitals within the region.

- Margaret Mary Hospital (Batesville, Indiana)
- King's Daughters' Hospital (Madison, Indiana)
- Dearborn County Hospital (Lawrenceburg, Indiana)
- Decatur County Memorial Hospital (Greensburg, Indiana)

Are the hospitals a possibility for implementing this Healthy Families type of program?

Several potential community partners were identified.

- Local business
- Charitable trusts
- Civic Clubs (40 & 8)
- Hanover College
- Extension Offices

A potential "turf war" that was identified was the liability/insurance issues that seem to accompany all providers, whether it be school, mental health, etc. Another potential problem cited was that upper management often cooperates with innovative ideas but the buy in doesn't necessarily trickle down or the staff left to implement the new idea are all ready over burdened.

The NACS program was briefly discussed and the group stated they would like to have a representative of that program come to the next meeting if possible.

The group stated they would like to continue to focus on prevention and get something going in that area instead of trying to do too many things at once.

It was suggested that RSC meeting be set for the next year so that everyone can have an ample amount of time for planning. The group decided that Friday mornings would work best and that the meetings should be monthly in the beginning and we can readjust the frequency if needed.

Next meeting was scheduled for December 9, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. Meeting will be held at the Ripley County DCS. All RSC members from Region 15 will be invited to attend this meeting.